88033 - The universe came into existence after not existing

the question

Is this statement correct? Are there any reservations about it from a doctrinal point of view? Please note that these two lines of poetic verse come from a text of Zabad ibn Ruslaan:

“I can be certain in my heart, and can say definitively, that the universe came into existence after not existing.

Allah created it and if He willed not to do that, He would not have started it.”

Please advise us, may Allah reward you.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The meaning of these two lines of poetic verse is sound, and there are no reservations concerning them. They refer to three things:

1.

That the universe came into existence and was created after not existing. This is undoubtedly true, for everything other than Allah is created, and came into existence after having not existed, as Allah, may He be glorified, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is, over all things, Disposer of affairs”

[az-Zumar 39:62].

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to saying that a created thing had no existence, and only Allah brought it into existence, that is true. Moreover, He is the Creator, Lord and Controller of all that exists, and nothing happens except by His power, His will and His creation. He is the Creator of all things, may He be glorified and exalted.

Majmoo‘ al-Fataawa (2/27).

He also said:

Thus whatever conclusions people of reason and understanding of different nations, philosophers and others, reach on the basis of sound reasoning reinforce and support the knowledge that the Messengers brought, against those who introduced into the Messenger’s religion that which contradicts his teachings. The knowledge that is acquired on the basis of the religious texts, in addition to knowledge based on sound reasoning, is also a refutation of what the heretical philosophers suggested, that some of the universe is eternal and without beginning as Allah is eternal and without beginning. Rather the view that the universe is eternal and without beginning is something that all people of reason agree is false. It is not only the Muslims who reject this view; rather the followers of all other religions, and the majority of non-Muslims, such as the Magians and different groups of polytheists, the polytheists of Arabia, the polytheists of India and of other nations, and the majority of prominent philosophers, all acknowledge the idea that this universe came into existence after it did not exist. Indeed, the majority of philosophers acknowledged that God is the creator of everything, and all the polytheist Arabs acknowledged that Allah is the Creator of all things, and that all of this universe is created, and that Allah is its Creator and Sustainer.

Majmoo‘ al-Fataawa (5/565).

2.

Allah, may He be exalted, created the universe not because He needed it. This is undoubtedly true, for Allah, may He be glorified, is Self-Sufficient and everything other than Him is in need of Him, as He, may He be glorified, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O mankind, you are those in need of Allah , while Allah is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy” [Faatir 35:15].

Shaykh Ibn Sa‘di (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his Tafseer (687):

Here Allah, may He be exalted, addresses all people and tells them about their real situation and that they are in need of Allah in all ways.

They are in need of His bringing them into existence; were it not for His bringing them into existence, they would not exist.

They are in need of His giving them physical strength, faculties and senses; were it not for His giving them these things, they would not be able to do any deeds.

They are in need of His providing them with nourishment, provision and blessings both visible and hidden; were it not for His bestowing His bounty and kindness, and making things easy for them, they would not have attained any provisions or blessings.

They are in need of His warding off harm from them, averting troubles and relieving them of stress and hardship; were it not for His warding off these things from them, relieving them of distress and removing hardship from them, their hardships and calamities would have been ongoing.

They are in need of His taking care of them in all ways.

They need to turn to Him, love Him, worship Him and devote their worship to Him alone. If He does not help them and guide them to do that, they will be doomed and they will become corrupt spiritually, psychologically and in all their affairs.

They are in need of His teaching them what they do not know and guiding them to that which is in their best interests. Were it not for His teaching them they would not have learned; were it not for His guiding them, their situation would not have been rectified.

They are inherently in need of Him in all ways, whether they realise some of those ways or not. But the one among them who is guided is the one who constantly realises and is aware of his need

for Allah in all his religious and worldly affairs, and he beseeches Him and asks Him not to leave him to his own devices for even the blink of an eye, and asks Him to help him in all his affairs, bearing this in mind at all times. Such a one is more deserving of complete help from his Lord and God, Who is more compassionate towards him than a mother towards her child.

“while Allah is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy” that is, He is the One Who is completely self-sufficient in all ways, so he has no need of what His creation needs. That is because of the perfect nature of His attributes, all of which are attributes of perfection and majesty.

One aspect of His being self-sufficient is that He meets all the needs of creation in this world and the hereafter.

“the Praiseworthy” in His Essence, in His names because they are most beautiful, in His attributes because they are most sublime, and in His deeds because they are based on generosity, kindness, justice, wisdom and mercy, and He is praiseworthy in His commands and prohibitions. So He is praiseworthy for what He is and what He does, and He is praiseworthy for being self-sufficient.

End quote.

At-Tahhaawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his famous book al-‘Aqeedah: That is because He has power over all things, and all things are in need of Him; everything is easy for Him, and He has no need of anything. There is none like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. End quote.

3.

What may be understood from the words “and if He willed not to do that, He would not have started it” is that Allah, may He be exalted, does what He chooses to do, and there is nothing that He could be obliged to do, as the philosophers suggested. If He so willed, He would not have created the universe, but He created it by His will and choice. This is true and is supported by the religious texts, such as the verses (interpretation of the meaning):

“Effecter of what He intends”

[al-Burooj 85:16]

“And your Lord creates what He wills and chooses”

[al-Qasas 28:68].

And Allah knows best.